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County of Huron

# Severe Winter Weather

Emergency Preparedness Guide





[www.HuronCounty.ca](http://www.HuronCounty.ca) | Visit our website for more information on emergency preparedness.

# Plan for Severe Winter Weather

Huron residents can expect severe weather during the winter season. Winter storms can limit access to services and cause extensive delays, power outages, hazardous winter driving, property damage, and life-threatening conditions.

Monitoring the weather forecast and being prepared can make a big difference to you and your household's safety when severe winter weather approaches.

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## Tips for how to be prepared:

- Stay informed of local weather forecast & alerts.
- Prepare your vehicles for the winter season.
- Avoid unnecessary travel during storms.
- Be prepared for power outages.
- Protect yourself & wear layers of warm clothing if outdoors.
- Have a household emergency plan.
- Have a 72-hour emergency kit.
- Stay clear of downed trees & power lines.

# Severe Winter Weather Information

When severe weather is approaching, Environment Canada will issue special alerts to notify those in the affected area. Paying attention to these alerts can help you take steps to protect yourself and your property from harm.

These public alert bulletins are issued through the media, Environment Canada's [Weatheradio service](#), and on [weather.gc.ca](#).

Examples of Public Weather Alerts that are issued by Environment Canada during the winter season include, but are not limited to:

- ❄️ Blizzard
- ❄️ Freezing Rain
- ❄️ Blowing Snow
- ❄️ Snowfall
- ❄️ Flash Freeze
- ❄️ Snow Squall
- ❄️ Freezing Drizzle
- ❄️ Winter Storm



[weather.gc.ca](#) | Environment Canada monitors and forecasts weather 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Types of Weather Alerts

### Special Weather Statements

**Special Weather Statements** are the least urgent type of alert and are issued to let people know that conditions are unusual and could cause concern.

### Advisories

**Advisories** are issued for specific weather events (like blowing snow, fog, freezing drizzle and frost) that are less severe, but could still significantly impact Canadians.

### Watches

**Watches** alert you about weather conditions that are favourable for a storm or severe weather, which could cause safety concerns.

### Warnings

As certainty increases about the path and strength of a storm system, a watch may be upgraded to a **Warning**, which is an urgent message that severe weather is either occurring or will occur. Warnings are usually issued six to 24 hours in advance, although some severe weather (e.g. tornadoes) can occur rapidly, with less than a half hour's notice.

# Winter Driving Information

Winter weather can create additional driving hazards such as ice and snow accumulation or decreased visibility. When these or other conditions reach extreme levels, the OPP may choose to close one or more roads for public safety. Roads may be closed for several hours, or even several days, depending on the size and scale of the winter storm.

Drivers are urged to consult regional sources of information before setting out on the road and use caution during the entire winter season.

## Tips for how to be prepared:

- Put winter tires on vehicles in time for the winter season.
- During weather related events, avoid all unnecessary travel.
- For safety, don't pass or drive close to snow plows & salt trucks.
- Have local tow truck contact information & an emergency car kit.
- Stay informed of your local weather forecast & alerts.
- Respect travel advisories & road closure notices.

## Emergency Car Kit

If you have a car, keep an emergency kit in your vehicle, especially for the cold weather season. Below are some items to consider in your kit:

- ☐ Food that won't easily spoil, such as energy bars.
- ☐ Water in plastic bottles (won't break if frozen).
- ☐ Blanket or sleeping bag.
- ☐ Extra clothing and shoes.
- ☐ First aid kit and a seatbelt cutter.
- ☐ Small shovel, scraper, and snow-brush.
- ☐ Hand and foot warmers.
- ☐ Wind-up flashlight.
- ☐ Whistle.
- ☐ Road maps.
- ☐ Cell phone chargers.
- ☐ Copy of emergency plan and personal documents.

Also, keep these inside your trunk:

- ☐ Sand, salt or cat litter (non clumping).
- ☐ Antifreeze/windshield washer fluid.
- ☐ Tow rope.
- ☐ Jumper cables.
- ☐ Fire extinguisher.
- ☐ Warning light or road flares.



## Provincial Highway Conditions

Conditions for highways #21, #8 and #4 are provided by the Ministry of Transportation through the Ontario 511 program.

Web: [www.ontario.ca/511](http://www.ontario.ca/511)

X: [@511Ontario](https://twitter.com/511Ontario)

Phone: Dial 511

## Road Closures & Re-Openings

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are solely responsible for deciding when to close or re-open a road under the Highway Traffic Act. The information for southwestern Ontario is available by through the OPP's X (formerly Twitter) accounts.

X: [@OPP\\_WR](https://twitter.com/OPP_WR)

X: [@OPP\\_COMM\\_WR](https://twitter.com/OPP_COMM_WR)

## School Bus Cancellations & Delays

In our region, school bus information is provided by Huron Perth Student Transportation Services.

Web: [ourschoolbuses.ca](http://ourschoolbuses.ca)

## Local Radio Stations

Local radio media may provide regular reports to the public about weather alerts, road closures, or school bus cancellations and delays.

**AM 920 – CKNX**

**FM 101.7 – The One**

**Cool 94.5**

**Country 104.9: Goderich**

**Shoreline Classics FM**

**90.5 MyFM: Exeter**



## Significant Weather Events & County Roads

Huron County has three types of roads: Local Municipal (lower-tier), County (upper-tier), and Provincial (Ministry of Transportation). The County of Huron is responsible for County roads only.

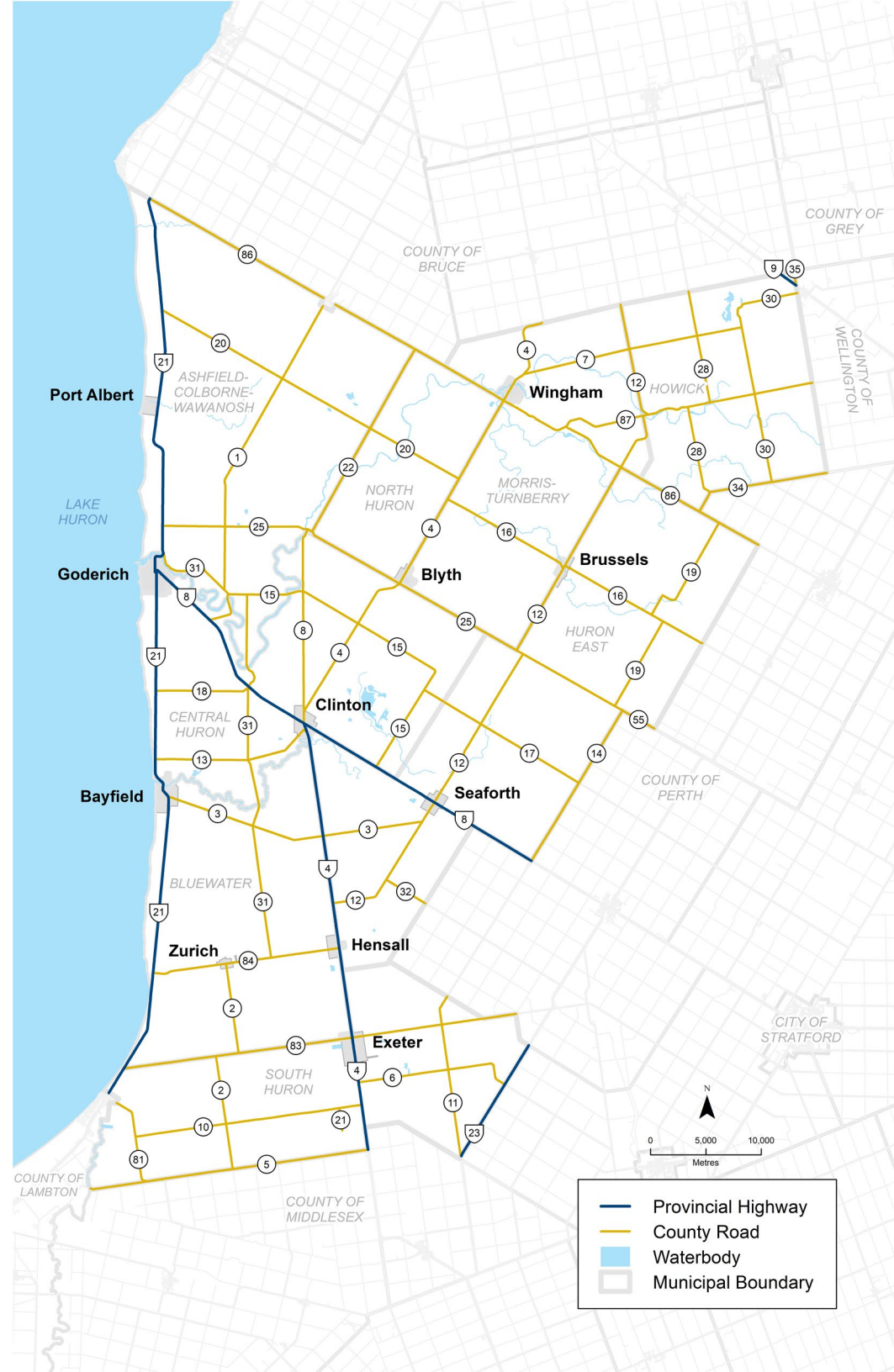
When the County is experiencing weather that may affect its ability to maintain the County Roads at the service levels that road users would normally expect, the County of Huron will declare a “Significant Weather Event” for upper-tier roads.

Typically, a Significant Weather Event Notice from the County of Huron would follow weather warnings issued by Environment Canada for the region.

During this time, a banner will appear across the top of the County of Huron website providing notice: [www.HuronCounty.ca](http://www.HuronCounty.ca)

The banner will be removed when the County has declared the Significant Weather Event to be over.

**Please note that the County’s Significant Weather Events do NOT indicate a closure of any road or an imminent closure of any road. Road closures and openings are issued by OPP.**



**Emergency Preparedness is everyone's responsibility.** Environment Canada, Ministry of Transportation, local law enforcement, County of Huron, local municipalities, and each individual resident has a role to play in keeping our roads and community safe. Let's work together to stay safe this winter season.



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**[www.HuronCounty.ca/emergency-management](http://www.HuronCounty.ca/emergency-management)**